



Saint Patrick Catholic Church

34 AMHERST STREET, MILFORD, NH 03055

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday: 9-12 and 1-5pm. Closed at Noon on Friday

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Patrick Roman Catholic Church is a welcoming community in a traditional and Eucharistic setting focused on prayer, service, and life-long faith formation on the values and teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church.

Parish Office: 673-1311 Fax: 673-3687

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Website: saintpatrickmilfordnh.org

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**Visit our website at:
saintpatrickmilfordnh.org
for more information and events
regarding the Coronavirus**

Starting this Saturday anyone who would like to pick up a blessed palms, they will be available at the entrance of the Church until Wednesday. We have a box for your old palms.

CONFESSION OPPORTUNITIES

Lent is the most appropriate time to celebrate this sacrament of God's merciful healing, the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession)

**WEDNESDAYS 4:15 - 5:
SATURDAYS 2:45—3:45 PM**

Prayer Line call: Diane or Patti

April 6-12, 2020

MON - 4/6— Monday of Holy Week

Mass Intention: Louis (Skip) DeBeradinis by the family

TUES - 4-7—Tuesday of Holy Week—

WED - 4/8— Wednesday of Holy Week—Mass Intention: Gloria Bernasconi by Jane Provins

THURS - 4/9 - Holy Thursday—Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 9-7pm

Mass Intention: Barbara Tetrault by Chris Conard

FRI - 4/10 – Good Friday (Abstinence) - Individual Veneration of the Cross from 9-7pm

SAT - 4/11 - Easter Vigil— The Church will be open from 9-5pm

SUN—4/12 - Easter Sunday—The Church will be open from 9-5pm

Mass Intentions - Members of the Parish; Deceased members of the Coté & Caveney families by Ida Caveney

ALL MASSES WILL BE CELEBRATED BY Fr. Dennis in private.

The Sanctuary Lamp will burn this week for George M. Emrich by his mother, Mary

Below is the official text of Pope Francis' meditation delivered in St. Peter's Square on March 27, as part of an extraordinary "Urbi et Orbi" blessing "to the city and the world" amid the spread of the coronavirus.

Mark 4:35-41 Jesus Calms the Storm

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

"When evening had come" (Mk 4:35). The Gospel passage we have just heard begins like this. For weeks now it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes by; we feel it in the air, we notice in people's gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying "We are perishing" (v. 38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this.

It is easy to recognize ourselves in this story. What is harder to understand is Jesus' attitude. While his disciples are quite naturally alarmed and desperate, he stands in the stern, in the part of the boat that sinks first. And what does he do? In spite of the tempest, he sleeps soundly, trusting in the Father; this is the only time in the Gospels we see Jesus sleeping. When he wakes up, after calming the wind and the waters, he turns to the disciples in a reproaching voice: "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" (v. 40).

Let us try to understand. In what does the lack of the disciples' faith consist, as contrasted with Jesus' trust? They had not stopped believing in him; in fact, they called on him. But we see how they call on him: "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" (v. 38). *Do you not care*: they think that Jesus is not interested in them, does not care about them. One of the things that hurts us and our families most when we hear it said is: "Do you not care about me?" It is a phrase that wounds and unleashes storms in our hearts. It would have shaken Jesus too. Because he, more than anyone, cares about us. Indeed, once they have called on him, he saves his disciples from their discouragement.

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The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our prepackaged ideas and forgetfulness of what nourishes our people's souls; all those attempts that anesthetize us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly "save" us, but instead prove incapable of putting us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity.

In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.

"*Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*" Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us. In this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: "Wake up, Lord!".

"*Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*" Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you. This Lent your call reverberates urgently: "Be converted!", "Return to me with all your heart" (*Joel 2:12*). You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a *time of choosing*. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others. We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial. It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people – often forgotten people – who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves. In the face of so much suffering, where the authentic development of our peoples is assessed, we experience the priestly prayer of Jesus: "That they may all be one" (*Jn 17:21*). How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer. How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all. Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons.

"*Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*" Faith begins when we realize we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we founder: we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars. Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God's strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies.

The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side. The Lord asks us from his cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look towards those who look to us, to strengthen, recognize and foster the grace that lives within us. Let us not quench the wavering flame (cf. *Is 42:3*) that never falters, and let us allow hope to be rekindled.

Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time, abandoning for a moment our eagerness for power and possessions in order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. It means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognize that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity. By his cross we have been saved in order to embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain all measures and all possible avenues for helping us protect ourselves and others. Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope.

"*Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?*" Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter's rock-solid faith, I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: "Do not be afraid" (*Mt 28:5*). And we, together with Peter, "cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us" (cf. *1 Pet 5:7*).



Saint Patrick Catholic Church

Reverend Dennis J. Audet, Pastor

E Mail: daudet52@gmail.com

March 30, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

The days that we are living don't seem real! The world has been thrust into an unwanted way of life. Thank God for the rock of our faith during this distressing time! Let's keep trying to make the most of this **LENT IN QUARANTINE** by taking the time to pray, to trust, to keep hope alive, and to place ourselves in the hands of Jesus while we are confined ... alone or with immediate family.

A few weeks ago, no one ever heard of "social distancing". Today, most people on earth now understand what those two words mean. We have been asked to cooperate and to sacrifice by those in authority for the swiftest eradication of this pandemic by practicing separation ... which does not come easy to us. Thankfully, the Lord promised never to separate Himself from us. Rather, these are the days when He is most close to us. God is with us!

Last Friday, our Holy Father Pope Francis led the cities of the world in a truly beautiful and inspiring meditation on the Gospel of Mark 4:35-41 ... **Jesus Calming the Storm**. I have included the complete text which I hope you will read and re-read. Interesting that this passage of the New Testament is the only time where it mentions that Jesus slept. While the disciples were panicking, Jesus was at peace! That peace can be ours when we keep our eyes and hearts fixed on Him. Let's not panic ... let us trust in God!

I want to thank the many individuals and families that continue to support the parish financially by mailing in or on line giving their weekly offering to the parish. I hesitate to bring money up during this national crisis. But like you, we depend on weekly income for survival. The bottom line is this: the parish cannot withstand weeks and weeks of no income. As you well know, the parish requires about \$8000 a week to break even. Anything you can do to help us by MAILING IN YOUR WEEKLY DONATION or DONATING ONLINE would be appreciated and very helpful. We will do everything we can to be prudent with our expenses. What concerns me the most at this time is to pay the salaries of our employees.

This coming Sunday begins **HOLY WEEK**. What follows below is the way we will keep Holy Week as holy as possible. Also, I will be available for individual confessions (behind the screen only by order of the Bishop) on several occasions before Easter. As you know, all public confession services have been cancelled.

So, stay well. I pray for you every day and offer Masses for you and your intentions. We are certainly united in prayer. Remember, "nothing can keep us apart from the Love of God.

Blessings to all!

Fr. Dennis

THE CHURCH WILL BE OPENED FROM 9:00 AM TO 5:00 PM DAILY – SUNDAY THRU SATURDAY for people to come to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. We ask all who come into the Church to practice "social distancing" so as to keep each other healthy. With this notice, I am publishing *PRAYERS BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT IN THE TABERNACLE* to help you pray in solidarity with our sisters and brothers throughout the world. St. Patrick, pray for us!



Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion (A)

Palm Sunday is a commemoration of highs and lows, exaltation and tragedy. We enter the church bearing palms singing Hosanna, and only minutes later we cry in unison, "Let him be crucified." This liturgy to open Holy Week is certainly intended to represent fickle humanity from creation down into our modern era. Profound themes of betrayal, trust, friendship, power, and humility are present in the gospel reading from Matthew.

Who doesn't know what it's like to experience betrayal at the hand of a friend, for that is the very term Jesus uses of Judas Iscariot. Judas himself leads the authorities to Jesus for the price of thirty pieces of silver. Shortly thereafter, he realizes the error of his ways and commits suicide. He was dead before Jesus was. Peter, too, betrayed Jesus but did not commit the ultimate act from which there is no return. The disciples who professed such devotion to Jesus only hours earlier folded quickly in the face of temptation. Jesus died alone, reviled even by those who were being crucified alongside him.

The taunts of the crowd sound like school yard bullies or street thugs. Their mocking requests for Jesus to come down from the cross and then they will believe are derisive. The attitude that says God can save him if he's really God's son is likewise sarcastic. Humanity itself is reflected in the crowd's behavior—in its willingness to put to death, after a sham trial, someone it turned on after only recently praising. There is a mob mentality at work and it should give us pause, not only for what happened in Jesus' day but for how such actions continue today. False testimony, deceit, betrayal, even physical force and violence leading to death are all prominently on display. The crowd, humanity itself, is only too eager to believe the worst, to mock, taunt, scourge, and kill the incarnation of love itself. Then, humanity has the gall to test God, telling God to rescue Jesus if he's really his son.

Of course, to be God's son means that Jesus trusts the Father to the point of enduring all things up to and including death. God's vindication will come not in bringing Jesus down from the cross, but in raising Jesus from the dead. God's ways are not human ways. We demand action from God that we can see with our own eyes. But there were no witnesses to the actual resurrection, only the risen Christ. The response demanded by God of humans is faith. When faced with deceit, lies, violence, and death, God has another way, and we are invited to enter into this new way of life.

Today's dramatic reading plunges us into the events of the paschal mystery. Like Jesus, we are called to remain faithful to God, ever trusting in his wisdom and providential care. To be God's son, Jesus demonstrates obedience and dedication to his mission to the point of death. Rather than shy away from the culmination of his ministry, Jesus faces it straightforwardly, knowing that it will result in a violent death. He places his confidence and trust in God himself, who will be true to his word, even when Jesus is on the cross.

The example of Jesus on this Palm Sunday inspires us to be true to God's will in our own lives. We are open to what God has in store, a resurrection from the dead that is new life. Such is the paschal mystery.

Fr. Dennis



HOLY WEEK

We are about to come to the MOST IMPORTANT WEEK OF THE CHURCH YEAR - HOLY WEEK - in the most unusual circumstances of a lifetime. How will we keep Holy Week holy during this Corona Virus pandemic? We can do this ... and still comply with the directives of our Bishop and our government leaders.

Even though we may not be able to come together for these celebrations, we can still make an effort to celebrate the great gift of Jesus Christ in His passion, death and resurrection. This is a time to be creative and still share in the awe and the joy of this sacred week.

What follows is what you will see and experience if you choose to make a visit in Church. Our hope is to help bring us all a deeper awareness of our faith in God and our need to become "Jesus alive" for one another especially during these most difficult days.

**THE CHURCH CONTINUES TO BE OPENED DAILY
FROM 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
UNLESS OTHER WISE INDICATED BELOW**

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION – APRIL 4-5, 2020

Blessed palms will be available for pick up Saturday thru Wednesday
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM.

MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK – April 6, 2020

Fr. Dennis will be available for individual Confessions from
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM and again from 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK – April 8, 2020

Fr. Dennis will be available for individual Confessions from
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM and again from 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

THE SACRED TRIDUUM (Three Days)

**Watch Pope Francis' Liturgies for the Triduum
on EWTN – Check your TV channel listing!**

HOLY THURSDAY - April 9, 2020

The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for individual adoration from
9:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

Additional Holy Thursday Retreat on CatholicTVLIVE.com
Thursday, April 9, 7:00 PM – *The Eucharist*

For Triduum Services from Holy Cross Cathedral in Boston, log onto CatholicTVLIVE.com

GOOD FRIDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION – APRIL 10, 2020

A crucifix will be enthroned in Church for individual veneration from
9:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

Copies of the *Stations of the Cross* will be available for private prayer.

For Triduum Services from Holy Cross Cathedral in Boston, log onto CatholicTVLIVE.com

EASTER VIGIL/ EASTER SUNDAY - April 11-12, 2020

The Church will be opened from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM Saturday and Sunday.

Blessed Easter Holy Water will be available for pick up.

For Triduum Services from Holy Cross Cathedral in Boston, log onto CatholicTVLIVE.com

Once again, here is the prayer when people are not able to Holy Communion.

Pope Francis' Prayer for Spiritual Communion:

*My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love you above all things and desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You.
Amen!*

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Scam Alert

With the COVID-19 crisis, many fraudsters are taking advantage of our fears, creating fake job and donation sites as well as sending emails that appear to be from the CDC, WHO, or other organization. Some important things to remember and be aware of:

Never give out your online banking credentials via e mail or texts. No legitimate company will ever ask for this info, and you risk fraudulent deposits or losses for which you could be liable.

Be very wary of emails or texts asking to click on links or open attachments.

Any job that deposits or sends you money and asks you to withdraw or send the funds elsewhere is likely a scam.

Recent scam jobs include receiving funds to act as liaison for donations, buying items from grocery/pharmacy to test price gouging, assisting with bitcoin purchases, and telling you to keep the info secret.

FROM “FORMED” OUR FAITH FORMATION WEB SITE

This is a difficult and unprecedented time for all of us. As Catholics, we are suddenly faced with our parish doors being locked and limited access to the sacraments. This can be very disheartening. Now more than ever, we must hold fast to the great virtue of Hope. In the words of Pope St. John Paul II “Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ.” We must open the doors of our hearts to Christ and trust in the Lord who will give us everything we need.

GO TO OUR PARISH WEBSTE AND CLICK ON THE GREEN BLOCK “FORMED” FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you are a parent with children home from school, make sure to utilize our faith formation curriculum..

As we are gathered together in our homes, this can be a tremendous opportunity to watch something as a family that will inspire hope and remind us all that the Lord will provide for us even through these difficult times.

Watch live on CatholicTVLIVE.com

www.catholicstv.org and by consulting local cable providers or network listings

As a reminder the faithful is invited to participate in the daily and Sunday Mass www.WatchtheMass.com , viewers can watch the Mass in English every day from Sunday to Friday and the Mass in Spanish every Sunday.

Ancient stories and songs: identity and irony

As Lent draws to a close, the Palm Sunday readings offer the believing community many images to reflect on during Holy Week. This week's readings ask (and answer) who Jesus is and ask us who we are.

Matthew's gospel is the passion story, in either its full or short form. Matthew focuses on Jesus fulfilling Hebrew scripture words and prophecies. Here are two ideas to look for in Matthew's passion story:

Identity: prophecy fulfilled. The passion story is the oldest preserved Christian tradition. Paul version is short and simple form: *Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day* (1 Cor 15:3b-5, written in 56-57 AD). As the *ekklesia's* first generation began to die, witnesses and early believers developed a longer oral narrative: *Jesus was arrested, tried, and crucified*. They also added *Hebrew scripture quotes and images* to explain Jesus' words and actions. The evangelists, writing in the late first century, brought together different elements. Mark and Matthew focus on *fulfillment themes*, especially from Psalms 22 and 69 and Isaiah. Matthew cites three *explicit* quotations about scripture or prophecy being fulfilled, but he also includes more than twenty-five *unattributed* quotations and actions from scripture. Matthew uses these scripture references to show that *Jesus is the promised messiah* and savior.

Irony: King of the Jews. Matthew repeats the title “king of the Jews” four times in today's reading. “King of the Jews” is a secular translation of the Hebrew word *māšīah* (in English, “messiah”), or the Greek word *khristós* (in English “christ”), both of which mean “anointed one.” *Matthew uses this title ironically.* To Romans, the term means a *Jewish revolutionary*; to Jewish leaders the title refers to the *false claims* Jesus made about the Temple's destruction; to Jewish synagogue leaders in Matthew's time, the title is about *false claims* Jesus' disciples continue to make about Jesus' messiahship. To Christians, the title is ironically *correct*, but with a meaning far different from the one intended by Roman and Jewish leaders.

Palm Sunday begins the celebrations of the liturgical year's most important feasts. The passion narrative, the story of our salvation, is rich and deep, and deserves a full and careful hearing. Hebrew and Christian scriptures recount and interpret prophecies and sayings about the anointed one who will suffer and save. Whom do we sing about when we offer thanks and praise? What do we mean when we call Jesus “king?” Whom will we stand with at the end of this week--secular leaders, soldiers, religious leaders, the crowd, or the believing community?

Terence Sherlock

Read the full reflection and subscribe at: LectionaryInContext.WordPress.com

5th Sunday of Lent – Fr. Dennis Reflection
St. Patrick Church - Milford

Poor Lazarus! He's the only guy that I know who ever had 2 funerals! This weekend's Gospel is about death. And when it comes to us during this surreal time when so many people have died as a result of this world-wide pandemic. The reality and the certainty of death comes to us all ... and it seems like there is no visible difference between human beings, whether they are believers or unbelievers. All humans are subject to the same fate; we are all travelling toward bodily death.

But I believe that condition of those of us who believe is, however, very different, even though the difference is not that apparent. We are all poor. To be poor means to be without access to power. When it comes to avoiding death, we are all us together in a state of radical poverty; we are totally powerless over death. We are poor and without access to the power of life because we are sinners.

God is radically powerful, having full power over death in His ability to bring life out of something that is utterly devoid of life, in His ability to bring life out of something that is quite dead. That is why, for the believing Christian, for those who receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, for those who come to God's table, the altar of sacrifice, and receive their daily Bread of Life, life is only changed by death, not ended. Our destiny, because we live on the Bread of Life, is to live life forever in the Communion of Saints with God.

Furthermore, we need to see that God is radically powerful over sin, having full power over sin in His ability to forgive our sins. That is why the Early Fathers of the Church saw the Sacrament of Reconciliation, saw the Sacrament of Forgiveness of Sins, in this account of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead, from his imprisonment in his own tomb. When we ask God to forgive our sins He raises us up to new life, just as He raised Lazarus to new life.

Jesus steps in front of Lazarus's tomb and utters his all powerful and insistent command: **Lazarus, come forth!** It is reminiscent of God uttering his commanding word in His original act of creation as we find it stated in the Book of Genesis. God utters His command and life is created. God breathes His Spirit into the inert soil of the earth and human life comes forth. God breathes His Holy Spirit into the dead body of Jesus Christ, imprisoned in his tomb right next to the Cross, and Christ comes forth from His tomb utterly free... and utterly filled with His new and resurrected human life. "*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life...*" To sin against the Holy Spirit is the unforgivable sin because to sin against the Holy Spirit is to deny that He forgives us our sins. Therefore, we die in them!

Our own humanity is found in Lazarus' dead humanity, imprisoned in his tomb. Our own humanity is deadened and imprisoned by our own sins. And when we allow God to approach us in His Anointed One, in His Christ, in our Messiah, we hear, as all the earth heard His life-giving word at the beginning of creation, God's majestic and imperious command: "Unbind him, and let him go free."

THAT is what the sacrament of forgiveness is all about; THAT is what happens when you go to confession and hear the life-giving words of your priest, the words of absolution and forgiveness of your sins, the words of God commanding you to come forth from that confessional, to come forth unbound and in freedom, to come forth in the resurrected life of Jesus Christ, victim of sin no longer, to walk in the freedom of the sons and daughters of God in a life free of sin.